

**Classic Poetry Series**

**Peter Klappert**  
**- poems -**

**Publication Date:**  
2004

**Publisher:**  
Poemhunter.com - The World's Poetry Archive

# Peter Klappert()

Peter Klappert (born 1942 Rockville Centre, New York) is an American poet.

He grew up in West Hempstead, New York, and Rowayton, Connecticut. He graduated from Cornell University and the University of Iowa, with an M.A. and an M.F.A.

His work has appeared in AGNI, Antaeus, Atlantic Monthly, Harper's, Ploughshares, AWP Chronicle, Lambda Book Report, The Gettysburg Review, and The Southern Review.

He was Briggs-Copeland Lecturer at Harvard University, and Writer-in-Residence at College of William and Mary.

He taught at Rollins College and New College of Florida. He currently teaches at George Mason University.

# Chokecherries

Thirty feet from my windows,  
an old kennel-wire fence  
thickly grown over with honeysuckle,  
poison ivy, and wild roses  
just beginning to open  
into the loose sort of droopy garlands  
an aesthetic young farmer  
might drape around Elsie  
or Dobbin.

.....Where the wire ends  
and the knotted up, spiraling vines  
paw toward more light, six slim  
grey trunks of chokecherry  
feather into leaves and  
clusters of blossoming fronds  
that lift and fall with the breeze  
like diminutive mare's tails  
--each separate flower a rose,  
each separate flower  
three-eighths of an inch of  
white disk, radiant  
about a head of yellow-gold stamens.

Beyond the chokecherries  
and a rutted road, beyond  
locusts posts and barbed wire,  
a deepening pasture lights up  
with ranunculus, "little frogs"  
for some reason, lights up  
--in fact--with buttercups  
as clouds move sunlight around.

And beyond them, veiled  
and perhaps faintly blue  
in the distance, broadly  
lit by the same shifting light,  
four rounded green mountains,  
on the nearest and tallest of which

someone has built a white silo  
and low barn--or more likely  
some kind of radar station  
that talks all night to darkness,  
some kind of early warning,  
perhaps an observatory.

.....I'm  
just happy to stand here,  
and hold my vote close,  
white-blinded and stupidly  
gazing into random galaxies  
and minor constellations, starbursts  
of yellow-haired stamens  
in white corollas.

Peter Klappert

# Thanksgiving

What a day to dismantle a roller-coaster.  
Well, they are taking it down--  
the tracks are all over the ground  
and the ties drawn up. The ticket office  
is shut, the calliope covered with tarps.

These workmen move their rides  
from town to town, with the weather,  
and a day gained dismantling  
is a day to them. They are grateful  
for the day gained, and for the silence  
in a park where only ducks and I remain.

As if against the numb fall sky,  
sounds of hammers and crowbars  
and the changing voice of one man's oldest son  
rebound from pond to light pole and away.  
Tomorrow they'll be on their way  
to Arkansas, or a place they haven't  
been before; today they're making time.

Today they're making time. The doors  
of the van are open, the van is dark.  
The cars stand there in a line, as if  
they are not well or have something  
to tell the man who stands on the tail-gate.  
This corner of the park is nearly flat.

Peter Klappert